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Did you pray for workers for the harvest? Last week? This week? Always? We need that imbedded in our brains somewhere. It's important. Jesus commended it. The harvest is important to Him. We need to pray for that. Daily.

II Corinthians 5:11, *"Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."*

The unsaid thing last week was, what about the portion of the field that isn't harvested? Terrible things are coming for this world. The portion that says, thank you very much, I'm quite happy to keep my sin, stay in Satan's camp, and face what comes.

Unspeakable things. Literally. John was about to write them down in Revelation 10:4 *4When the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them."*

I have to admit that often, I feel helpless. I look up and down my street and everyone has their ordered lives, their stuff, their version of the

american dream. We are distracted. We have enough of everything, to the point that we're completely distracted with our lives.

We have enough television and social networking web surfing and i-phones, and books from Audible dot com to fill every waking moment with virtual white noise that drowns out reality. We are mesmerized.

No one needs chicken little going through the neighborhood shouting "the sky is falling".

I believe that when the ark was tarred and the door was sealed shut, that something like a tidal wave came when the windows of heaven were opened. The people never knew what hit them. Their virtual reality was swept away in an instant.

Noah had preached righteousness for 120 years while the ark was being built. Then one day the preaching was over. The door was sealed shut. A tidal wave swept in and covered . . everything.

The freeboard of that boat was way beyond the 6 foot height of people and I believe it floated instantly. That much water. Jesus seems to believe that too.

*Mt. 24...37"For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. 38"For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be....*

*and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away*

they did not understand. They were pre-occupied with . . ordinary life. Marrying, working, good ordinary stuff. And then the water swept them away. When the tidal wave comes, it's too late.

We were down at a beloved neice's home last weekend in Manhattan Beach. They have made some excellent money because of hard work, intelligence, and being in the right place at the right time. Internet

company that figured out how to turn all of the page turning into a little bit of cash. Which becomes millions.

Their home is this understated elegant statement of restraint and class. They haven't bought a palace. They've built just the classiest 4000 square foot house a bicycle ride from the beach. Everything about it is perfect. We enjoyed their hospitality as my neice, gave her dad, Pam's sister's husband, the perfect retirement party.

You swing open the dutch door in the front and the great glass doors at the rear, and the wood casement windows, and the sea breeze just brings the house to the perfect temperature. Even the bugs don't bother you there.

We're completely distracted. Mesmerized. Intoxicated. Incoherent. Struck dumb. No one at that party wanted to hear that they were ripe and about to be harvested, one way or another, for eternity. When my margarita glass was empty, (I always finish by eating the lime, skin and all), Jenny would bring me another one.

I'm just as guilty. As soon as I get 14 pages of Times New Roman in font size 16, I'll go out and play with a black 1938 Ford. Meanwhile, my neighbors are this field of wheat, blowing in the breeze, rippling, waiting for the sickle. Except they're not waiting for the sickle, because no one has told them one is about to harvest them, and anyways, they're totally distracted with what they're into just now.

And Paul says; "*Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.*"

Did you at least pray for workers to be sent to the harvest?

We read through the passage this morning and to us it's dis-connected. It's a nice Bible story about Jesus and his disciples. It obviously doesn't have anything to do with us, except to just enjoy it because it's nice.

We're a million miles away from this kind of commitment, this kind of a task, this kind of a master - slave relationship, this kind of imminent

necessity.

So, Jesus has these 12 guys who have left the trinkets and distractions of ordinary life behind and followed Him in order to learn from Him.

Their relationship to Him is that of a slave to a master. A good and loving master who will meet every need, but still, they are owned by Him and do His bidding.

They are in school. The whole world is their classroom. Everywhere Jesus goes and everything He does as He interacts with this world, is their lesson.

A day is imminent when He will no longer be there. How will that go. What will that look like?

This sending is in immediate consequence of Jesus looking out over the harvest. He is stirred by the lost condition of the sheep. They are scattered and devastated.

School is in session. The lesson is for them to fly solo for a short season. Solo in the sense that He's not going to be with them. They will go and preach and heal for a season, without him.

Happily, for me at least, in Mark 6, in the parallel section we see that He sent them out 2 by 2.

I think there is synergy in 2. I think you're more than the quotient of the combined parts when you're 2. I'm just not very brave when I'm alone. 2 is so much easier.

So the master is going to send His slaves into His field and He's going to line them out on exactly how He wants things to happen for this project. Some of these requirements are only for them, at this time, on this project. Some are useful and wise for any project.

*5These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them:*

In the last 3 years I've read hundreds of accounts of interviews of americans who were born into slavery. My motivation was that the fallout of slavery in America is still affecting the church in the United States to this day.

And people who weren't there are re-writing history and stacking the deck, this way or that way, and I just was interested to read accounts directly from the mouth's of the slaves in order to get a feel, if possible for what that might have been like.

Some of them are horrific. Many of them are hopeless. Much despair. Always there is the racism. You are born into a caste because of the color of your skin, that is impossible to do anything about.

Many, many, made the best of a bad situation. Often there is merriment. Little celebrations. A gamut of possibilities. I encourage anyone who is trying to understand our current problems to go and read, from the mouths of those who lived it, what happened.

In every situation, good, bad, or otherwise, the common denominator is that you are not at liberty to question or deviate from what your master has commanded you to do.

*5These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them:* That word that the nasb translators has translated 'instructing' them is; paraggelló

Originally this was a military word. Orders. In the military, you get your orders. Same idea. There is authority and there is command of what you must do. Orders.

In the case of slaves, it's the same thing. The master might take his slaves aside and say, I want the north field harvested first, because it was planted first, or whatever, and I want you to start at that corner and work east to west until you get to this fence line.

And that's what the slaves go do. They don't have a big discussion about how, you know, if we started here and went this direction, we'd have some afternoon shade, etc. etc. They don't get to have input. They

follow orders. paraggello. Jesus has a bunch of them;

*“Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; 6but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

He doesn't tell us why He chose this order. Maybe He hints. His heart is toward the lost scattered decimated sheep of His people Israel. Start there.

Maybe the slave owner in our illustration knows that a certain corner of the field is totally ripe and in fact one more day of sun would actually degrade the crop. He has his reasons. So does Jesus. He lines them out exactly how He wants it done.

The one thing we do know, even if some times we don't understand God's timing and reasons. Actually several come to mind.

Romans 8:28 promises; *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

Mark 7:37 *He doth all things well.* Jesus does everything, in it's time, perfectly.

Romans 11:33 *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!*

We are His slaves. We believe He has our best interest in His heart. That eliminates questions. When He speaks, we obey.

Usually, our problem is that we're not lined out with the exactness that the disciples received at this sending. We pray for this kind of direct orders.

Jesus is not here excluding the Samaritans and the nations. In the great commission He sends all of us, to the uttermost parts of the earth. Just now though, He has a certain corner of the field in mind. That's where

He sends His 12.

7“*And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’*”

He tells them where to go. He tells them what to say. He even tells them how to say it.

(kay-roos'-so) Proclaim. Preach. With authority.

*The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’*

This is the story of the Bible. Redemption from sin. Release from sin's consequence. Death.

From Genesis forward, this is the crescendo of the book. We were dead in our trespasses and sin. Jesus came to make us alive together with Him. Life. Eternal life.

All of that is part and parcel with this proclamation. The authority to reign of God, has come. Come out of darkness into light. Come out of Satan's captivity and be a child of God.

We spoke in more depth on this topic last Sunday. I would urge you to go to our web pages and read last weeks sermon if you missed.

This is the "good news!" The gospel. *The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’*

The whole book from Genesis to Revelation is about this event! God is re-taking this world. Salvation to His redeemed ones. Judgement on those who ignore this news. As we shall see.

8“*Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.*”

These sign gifts are the attestation of the apostles of the church. I can't do these. I don't know anybody who can do these. They were apostolic. As the canon of scripture was completed, these signs ceased. The new had come.

*Freely you received, freely give.*

The gospel is free. The gift of salvation is free. The charge to the recipients is . . . free. Maintenance of the ones proclaiming is underwritten by the people who already belong to God.

*9“Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, 10or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support.*

Under different circumstances, a man plans a journey to proclaim a message over a period of time. He plans ahead for his needs and comfort. He'll need a money belt. Gold, silver, copper, all in their place to pay his way. He'll need an extra coat. Don't want to get caught without a coat. The first may wear out, or be lost. Or it may get cold out.

He'll need an extra pair of sandals for when these are shot. He'll need a back pack to carry this stuff around in. He'll tie on an extra staff in case the one he's using gets broken or lost. He's self sufficient for the journey planned.

Jesus says, in this case, don't do that. Not this time. You're going to go out in the faith that God has His people that belong to Him spread throughout the breadth of the journey, and they are going to meet your needs.

Step out in faith. Your heavenly father knows what you need. Didn't Jesus say that in the sermon on the mount. For the purposes of this journey, we're going to leave all that required sufficiency at home and trust the Lord to meet every need.

Later on in Luke 22 He says just the opposite.

*Lk. 22:35 - 37 35And He said to them, "When I sent you out without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?" They said, "No, nothing." 36And He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever*



*has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one. 37"For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment."*

The gospel message stays the same. The circumstances of engagement change. Sometimes you take your money and buy a sword. Sometimes you leave that stuff home.

Jesus is sending them to a nation that has the unique privilege of being chosen by God. This message is the next logical progression for that nation. Surely they can feed the one bringing it.

On the other hand, a day is coming when they will be dispersed throughout the earth to lands and peoples who are hostile or at least indifferent to their message. There's no reason to think anyone there would care for their well being. So take what you need in that case.

*10b for the worker is worthy of his support.*

Yet, even the apostle Paul practiced his trade of tentmaking as he went to the gentiles. Later on as the churches began to mature, they begged him to allow them to support him.

*11 "And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city.*

This is good common sense. God's people are supposed to help you along your way. That's the way Jesus has laid this project out. So you're going to Tonopah and you see on the interweb, you can get a good rate at Bobbies Buckeye Bar while you're staying in town.

No. Bad call. That is not a worthy house. Staying there will affect your credibility as you proclaim in the surrounding area.

Or another pitfall. You get to Tonopah and check with TCC and the pastor there has a modest home with a modest room and very modest simple meals. He offers that to you and you take it.

But a day in, after the first event, some other good folks who have a better house and better food offer you their home. So you leave the crummy house and move up to the fancy one up the hill.

Also bad form. Feelings get hurt. The church splits. All kinds of discontent, just from that simple error.

God provides the accomodation. That's His gift to you. Stay put. Thankfully.

This idea of no fee and thankfully receiving God's provision is the key to being content. This is what God provided me. This is enough. Good rule.

*12 "As you enter the house, give it your greeting. 13 "If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace.*

I'm chuckling as I think to myself about every non-christians favorite verse. The one they all know and throw around. *Judge not, lest you be judged.*

How idiotic. We're required to make judgement calls, ALL THE TIME. Here's one here.

Give the house your greeting. Blessings on this household. May all in it prosper and enjoy the Kingdom of God.

And the guy says We hate God. And His kingdom. We live how we want to live. I beat my wife and abuse my children.

That house is unworthy. You take back your blessing.

That might be a case where you checked in and learn later there's all this bad stuff going on. The people around town aren't receiving your message. You're staying with a wifebeater. Take back your blessing and get out of there.

This is all good common sense type stuff.

Where is "unfriending" in the Bible? My daughter tells me about facebook. She had to unfriend a sister-in-law. Weirdness. It turned out to be a big deal. The message was sent though.

*14 "Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet.*

I approached this with a bit of humor. But this is serious business.

You bring the good news, free of charge, the best news with the most value in this world or the next, and the people reject it. They hear it. They understand it. They perhaps even calculate the cost. Their sinful way of life. Their darkness, which they love.

They reject the good news. Often they then become belligerent. Perhaps even threatening. Darkness hates light.

Time to move on. *as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet.*

They love their dirt. Leave it with them as you go.

Is there consequence to that? Oh yeah! It may have been you they booed off the stage, beat up, ran out of town. But really, it wasn't. It's God they hate.

And yes, He has a book. He writes it all down. It ain't over yet.

I remember when I was about 20, I was hired as an electrician helper. So my boss sent me out with this gruff old guy named Harvey. Harvey was a mountain, in more ways than one. Knowledge of the trade! But he was old and needed a guy to go up and down the ladders to put things in place.

One day I shared the gospel with Harvey. He blew me off and I shut up

after that. But it didn't stop there. He went to the boss and said do not ever send that guy with me again. I don't want to hear that stuff. He was mad about it. He was also dead before six more months were past.

*15“Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.*

The way that a household or city received the disciple who is bringing the good news will be written down in a book of remembrance. It isn't finished, that day.

Before we finish our thoughts, I want to take one little side trip. Did Jesus believe Sodom and Gomorrah were real places, or did He think they were fictional poetry? The liberal theologians tell us Genesis is just Hebrew poetry. Hebrew fables like Mother Goose, with a moral, etc.

Jesus always talks about the old testament people and places as real. He doesn't ever say something like *15“Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Cair Paravel and Terebinthia in the day of judgment than for that city.*

The larger issue is this. If Jesus didn't really believe Sodom and Gomorrah were real places with real sin, the whole idea of future judgement goes out the window with the imaginary places.

Or you have an even bigger problem. Sodom and Gomorrah were fictional places in a section of poetry, and Jesus didn't know that. He thought they were real.

Any way you dig this hole, which the liberal theologians created in order to make the Bible more believable and easier to get in line with the wisdom of so-called higher learning, causes way more problems than a real Sodom and a real Gomorrah which angels visited and then God smote.

Jesus never mentions any of these things as though they were not literal places and events. Sodom and Gomorrah happened just as the Genesis

record says it did.

How frightening that family and friends and neighbors who hear the good news and then go on about their business, unchanged, face a greater condemnation than Sodom and Gomorrah which fire came down from heaven and consumed!

What's in here for us? How does this apply? What do we take away?

First; That discipleship with the end result that this message should be spread throughout the earth was deadly important to Jesus and began here.

It has traveled like the baton in a relay race and been brought intact, to us. X2

You know, I have a dislike for those emails that want you to send them on to someone else or you're obviously a dead beat who doesn't care if everything that's near and dear to redneck conservatives is lost forever. Blah blah blah.

You know the ones I mean. It gives me a sort of pleasure to read that last line and then, highlight - delete

Did satan invent those in order to cheapen the one message that we are responsible to pass on, intact?

The baton in this relay race of the message of the kingdom has gotten safely to us.

We could even go door knocking and take it to our neighbors and families and friends.

Even at that, the likelihood is that it will stop here.

It doesn't get handed off safely to the next runner unless a new generation of disciples is growing up in our midst to take it.

This is deadly important. IF we don't successfully do that, explain to me what the difference is between us and the folks who get the dust shaken back to them and ultimately the judgement worse than Sodom's.

We dare not delete this email.

If we're not ready to get serious about being evangelicals, if we're not far enough along in that journey, then I urge you to at least PRAY! Pray for the Lord of the Harvest to send workers into His harvest. We can all do *that*.

American evangelicalism has gotten to a place where it exists just fine, without God. No Holy Spirit. No need. We've got our quips and our quotes and we whip up some excitement and God is no longer needed.

Beloved, I'm praying for more for this church. I'm not willing to settle for that. I'm desperate to sense the Spirit's presence amongst us.

I don't think He'll come unless we get serious about the things we're looking at this morning. Discipleship and evangelism. Pray for the Lord to send workers into His harvest. Please.